

PUTNAM VETERANS REGISTER

An E-mail Newsletter of the Putnam County Office of Veterans Services

Christmas in the Trenches by John McCutcheon

My name is Francis Tolliver, I come from Liverpool.
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.
To Belgium and to Flanders, to Germany to here
I fought for King and country I love dear.

'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung,
The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung

Our families back in England were toasting us that day
Their brave and glorious lads so far away.
I was lying with my messmate on the cold and rocky ground
When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound
Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" each soldier strained to hear
As one young German voice sang out so clear.
"He's singing bloody well, you know!" my partner says to me
Soon, one by one, each German voice joined in harmony
The cannons rested silent, the gas clouds rolled no more
As Christmas brought us respite from the war

As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause was spent
"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Kent
The next they sang was "Stille Nacht." "Tis 'Silent Night'," says I
And in two tongues one song filled up that sky

"There's someone coming toward us!" the front line sentry cried
All sights were fixed on one long figure trudging from their side
His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shown on that plain so bright
As he, bravely, strode unarmed into the night

Soon one by one on either side walked into No Man's Land
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand
We shared some secret brandy and we wished each other well
And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell

We traded chocolates, cigarettes, and photographs from home
These sons and fathers far away from families of their own
Young Sanders played his squeezebox and they had a violin
This curious and unlikely band of men

Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more
With sad farewells we each prepared to settle back to war
But the question haunted every heart that lived that wonderous night
"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"

'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost, so bitter hung
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung
For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work of war
Had been crumbled and were gone forevermore

My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell
Each Christmas come since World War I,
I've learned its lessons well
That the ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame



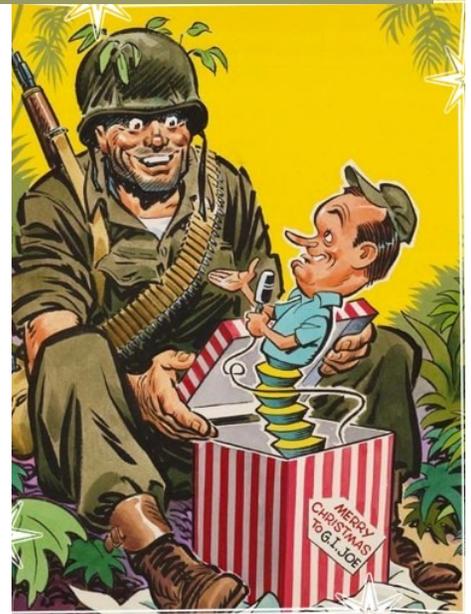
If you think you are experiencing Déjà vu you are not. This is the same as I posted on the first page of the Holiday Issue last year. The message is so powerful and universal it should be read each year.

In 1914 there was an unprecedented and unofficial Christmas truce between the British and German Troops. The US had not entered the war, in fact the war was only a few months old. Perhaps the troops knew that it was going to be a long and bloody war, they were people who were doing the actual fighting after all.

There was never another Christmas Truce during the War to End all War. Although Garth Brooks, in his classic song "Belleau Wood", created an American Christmas Truce. The only problem is that the Battle of Belleau Wood took place in June of 1918 not Christmas time. Also as mentioned earlier the US was not in the war at the time of the truce.

Not withstanding creative history let each of us embrace the spirit of that Christmas Truce and pray for peace and keep close to our hearts those who even now guard the gates of freedom.

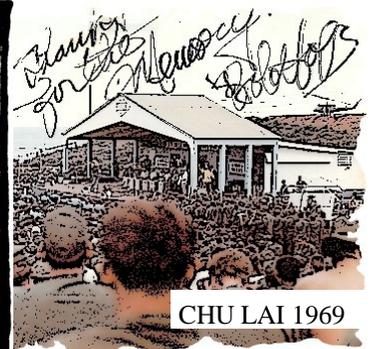
**From the Veterans Service Agency
Staff,
Mim, Richie, Art and Karl**



IN DECEMBER OF 1969 I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE BOB HOPE SHOW IN CHU LAI . AFTER SITTING IN MY PARENTS LIVING ROOM FOR YEARS WATCHING HIS SHOW FOR THE TROOPS ON TV IT WAS A THRILL TO SEE IT IN PERSON. ALL THINGS NOT BEING EQUAL I WOULD HAVE RATHER WATCHED IT FROM MY PARENTS LIVING ROOM. I HAVE TALKED TO FELLOW VETERANS AND MANY SAY THE NEVER SAW A HOPE SHOW. WELL I DID AND ENJOYED IT A GREAT DEAL

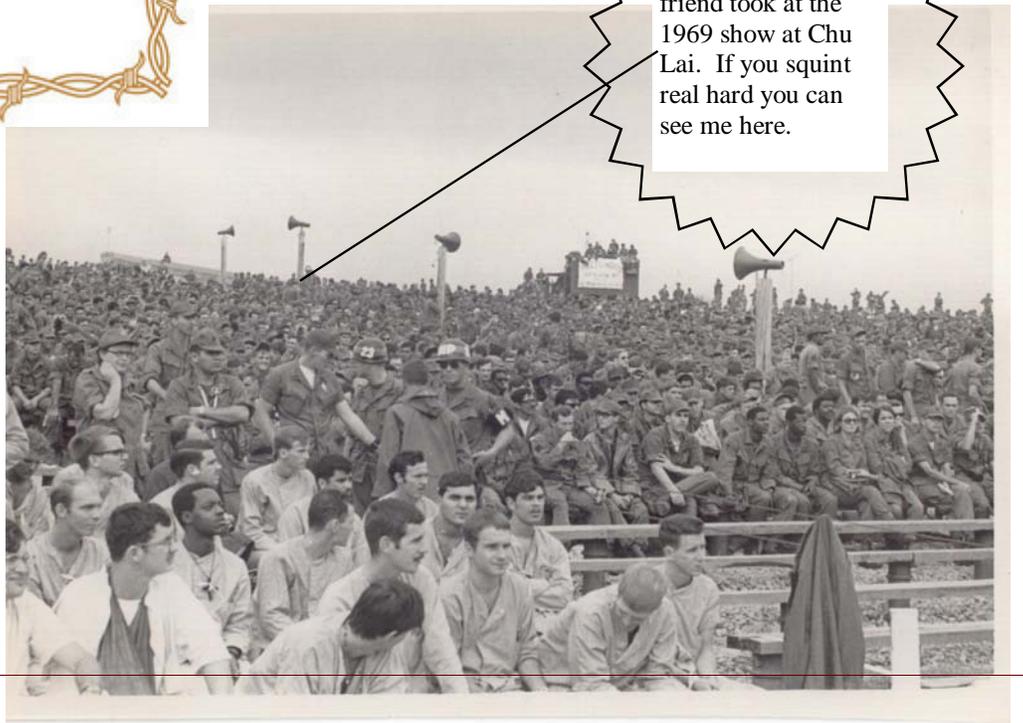


THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, BOB HOPE



CHU LAI 1969

Actual picture a friend took at the 1969 show at Chu Lai. If you squint real hard you can see me here.





The Foreign Medical Program is a program we have established to provide health care benefits to U.S. veterans with VA-rated service-connected conditions who are residing or traveling abroad (Philippines excluded). Under FMP, we (the VA) assume payment responsibility for certain necessary medical services associated with the treatment of those service-connected conditions. This information we have posted on this site, and to which we have created links are designed for veterans with VA-rated service-connected conditions who are planning to move or travel abroad

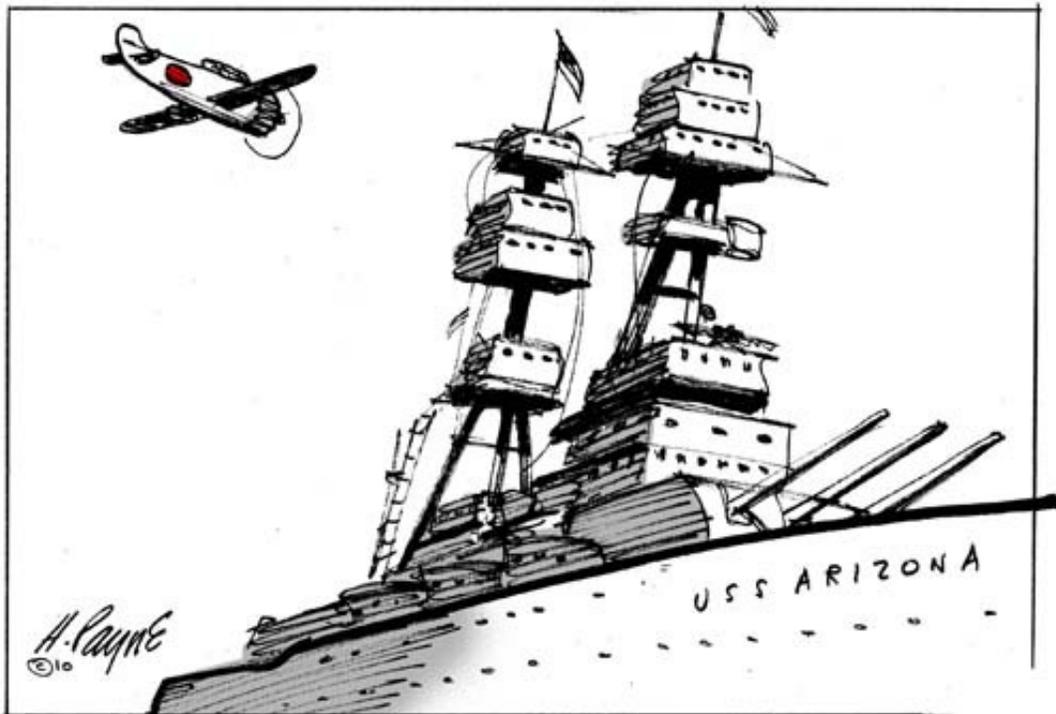


and addresses the procedures for obtaining health care services for service-connected conditions while in a foreign country and how to file a claim for VA payment or reimbursement. With the exception of medical services received in Philippines, all foreign provided services are under the jurisdiction our Foreign Medical Program (FMP) Office in Denver, Colorado. The FMP Office is responsible for all aspects of the program including application processing, verification of eligibility, authorization of benefits, and

payment of claims. If you are a veteran living or traveling outside the United States and have questions about other VA benefits such as compensation and pension exams and disability ratings you should direct those questions to your servicing VA regional office (see *Assistance with Other VA Issues* at bottom for more information). Or you can access the VBA's Foreign Services Web site here: <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/foreign/index.htm>

- Country Number
 USA and Canada (877) 345-8179
 Germany 0800-1800-011
 Australia 1 800 354 965
 Italy 800 782-655
 UK 0800-032-7425
 Mexico 001-877-345-8179
 Japan 00531-13-0871
 Costa Rica 0800-013-0759
 Spain 900-981-776

TWIN TOWERS, 12-7





*Putnam Veterans Service Agency (M & F)
110 Old Route 6, Bldg 3
Carmel, NY 10512
845-808-1620*

A newer VA program exists that could help caregivers of disabled veterans. This VA program, called the VA Caregiver Support Program, is designed to assist those who help disabled veterans. The program provides a wide range of service to caregivers of eligible veterans of all eras. If a disabled veteran is unable to perform an activity of daily living or if the veteran needs supervision or protection

based on his/her impairments or injuries, their caregivers can receive training and assistance on how to successfully care for the veteran. Some specific services caregivers may be eligible for include training as a home health aide or other caregiver training, as well as potential qualification for up to 30 days of respite care for the caregiver. Caregivers of our newer crop of combat veterans, OEF/OIF veterans, may be eligible for additional benefits on top of those mentioned above. These caregivers, upon completion of training requirements, may be eligible for a monthly caregiver stipend

directly related to the degree of care the veteran would require. The caregivers in this program can be a spouse or other family member or even a friend. All they need to do is be identified by the veteran as the caregiver and then complete the VA training. To initiate entry into the program, whether as an OEF/OIF veteran or not, a VA Form 10-10cg should be completed. As usual, I would suggest any veteran or family member work with a qualified Veterans Service Officer to apply. For additional questions on the VA Caregiver Support Program, you can call the Caregivers Support Line at: 1-855-260-3274 (toll free).

***Castle Point VAMC (T, W, TH)
PO Box 633, Bldg 19, Rm C210
Castle Point, NY 12511
845-831-2000 x5449***

The Office of the Director of Veterans Services-Putnam

On December 25, 1776, the ice-clogged and storm-swept Delaware River was chosen as the setting for one of the most pivotal events of the American Revolution. On that historic Christmas Day, General George Washington crossed the Delaware near Trenton, New Jersey, to attack the British Army and its Hessian allies.

From that Christmas in 1776 until now, American men and women in uniform have spent many Christmases on battlefields around the globe. This year is no different. Because of this personal sacrifice, and the sacrifice of many Americans, we are a free nation able to celebrate in the custom of our choosing, by whatever name or

tradition it is known.

I wish you joy and peace as we celebrate this season and may 2013 be a year of health, happiness and prosperity for us all.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Art Hanley , Deputy Director

Donald. B. Smith Government Campus
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Carmel, NY 10512

Phone (845)808-1620
Fax (845)808-1940



“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 —
a date which will live in infamy”
Franklin D. Roosevelt



PEARL HARBOR & 911 MEMORIAL EXHIBIT



DECEMBER 7TH 2012

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the County Clerk's office 34 Gleneida Ave. Carmel NY

The Carmel and Putnam Valley VFW will host a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony at the Veterans Hall on Gleneida Ave. in Carmel at 7 PM.

- ★ Memorabilia presented by **Brian Benedict** of The Duffle Bag, Patterson, NY
- ★ Private collection of 9/11 artifacts will be on display.
- ★ Donations will go to The **Wounded Warrior Project**.

PRESENTED BY:
MARYELLEN ODELL, PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND
THE CIVIL AIR PATROL PUTNAM COUNTY SQUADRON
WWW.PUTNAMCOUNTYNY.COM